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THE CITY OF THE DESERT

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To dear "Katie" -

With affectionate

Good wishes

Dec 25th

1857.

THE

CITY OF THE DESERT

AND

Other Poems.

By OXONIENSIS.

PRINTED FOR PRIVATE CIRCULATION.

MDCCCLI.

LOAN STACK

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To Her Royal Highness

THE DUCHESS OF GLOUCESTER,

THIS SMALL VOLUME IS, BY SPECIAL PERMISSION,

DEDICATED

BY HER ROYAL HIGHNESS' MOST GRATEFUL, MOST HUMBLE,

AND MOST OBEDIENT SERVANT,

THE AUTHOR.

TO THE READER.

THE following Rhymes have neither the excuse of hurried preparation, for their imperfections, nor of too partial friends' advice, for their publication.

They have all, with but few exceptions, appeared from time to time in the various periodicals of the day, and are now only issued in a collected form.

It is hoped, therefore, that since any approval they then may have met with is, long ere this, exhausted, the criticism they provoked is, as equally, allayed; so that, even though there be none now to point out a redeeming feature, there may be quite as few to discover an unpardonable fault.

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THE CITY OF THE DESERT.

QUEEN of the wilds, awake!—the minstrel flings
A daring hand across the trembling strings;
Fain would he bid thee, PETRA, yet once more
Arise in all the vaunted pomp of yore;
Fain would he see thee once again appear
Through the dim mists of many a by-gone year,
And, like a giant shade of other days,
Amid the gloom thy mighty form upraise!

There was a time, ere centuries had roll'd
Away unnoticed 'as a tale that 's told'—
Ere ages pass'd into Eternity,
Like heaving wavelets on a summer sea,—

When, onward led by an Almighty hand,
Blest Israel's children sought the promised land;
When thousands, erst so boastful of their might,
Now shrunk before them, speechless with affright,
And nations, stubborn as the earth they trod,
First learn'd to tremble at the name of God.
Presumptuous Edom! in thine own brief hour
Of fleeting pride and transitory power,
In impious tone thou badest them turn and bow,[1]
And, lo! that vaunting pride—where is it now?

Long, long ago, as evening's shadows fell,
Afar was heard the camel's tinkling bell,
By distance sweet, as o'er the desert waste,
In sight of home, right merrily they haste.
And, oh! how beams the wanderer's weary eye
To gaze on scenes embalm'd in memory,

[1] The Edomites forbade the passage of the Israelites through their territory: "And Edom said, thou shalt not go through."—*Numbers*, xx. 20.

Again to mingle with the loved of yore,
Each danger vanish'd and each sorrow o'er!

And to thy footstool, Desert Queen, they bring
Wealth that would gladden India's richest king;
The perfumed sweets of 'Araby the blest,'
That beauteous land where Phœbus loves to rest;
The gorgeous purples from the Tyrian shore;
Silks from a loom that ne'er may weave them more;
The priceless offerings of the golden East,
To deck the palace, or adorn the feast.
Princes were then thy guests, the great thy friends,
Thine all the charm that wealth to power lends;
Old and renown'd thy high ancestral line,
And every hope and every wish was thine.
Then fill'd thy homes a thoughtless, merry throng;
Then rung thy halls with many a minstrel song;
Then music floated by on Zephyr's wing,
And Joy, unclouded, ruled it, triumphing.

How art thou changed!—in each once crowded street,
No more again the princely merchants meet;
No more again the lightsome laugh resounds,
Nor pleasure speeds her fascinating rounds;
No more, as grateful eventide draws nigh,
Awakes the voice of joyous revelry;
No dusty camel trains approach the gate;—
All now is hush'd, and drear and desolate!

Oft where the palm-tree's feathery boughs once spread
A welcome shelter o'er the traveller's head,
Where bubbling springs well'd forth with icy wave,
Pilgrims were wont their weary feet to lave,
And, stretch'd at ease beneath the ample shade,
Still lingering, wonder'd not that yet they staid.
Full often, too, thy sunny daughters came,
And eyes, whose flash no northern sky might claim,

Beam'd at some tale to Arab maidens dear,
Or, dim with pity, dropp'd the gentle tear.

Such Petra once! Ah, never more again
Shall music sigh across the desert plain,
Nor ever more the shatter'd palm-trees fling
Their once green branches o'er the lonely spring;
And summer flowerets that, around their feet,
Erst scented evening with a breath so sweet,
Erst bathed their beauties in the silver tide,
Now, dead and trampled, strew the fountain side!
In silent sorrow droops the palm alone;
The song is hush'd, the merry voices gone.
And thou, proud city! now the giant tomb
Of grandeur sunk beneath a hopeless doom,
Who now beholds thee, in thy sculptured pride,
And marks not Ruin's empire far and wide,
And asks not, as he stands with wondering gaze,
This mighty Edom's boast in other days?

A chasm,[2] reft down through the living rock,
Whose dusky sides Time's fiercest efforts mock,
Whose frowning precipices almost meet,
And threaten danger to intruding feet,
By one grey crumbling arch of triumph spann'd,
As thrown across by some wild wizard hand,
So light, and yet with such proportions fair,
Seems as 'twere high suspended in the air,—
This is thy portal, Petra,—this the gorge,
Cloven by weapons from no human forge,
Form'd all thy hidden beauties to protect,
The outwork bold of Nature's Architect.

Gloomy and dark at first, but wildly grand,
At length its narrow boundaries expand ;

2 "The only entrance to Petra, on the east, is through a frightful chasm in the rocks, not more than sufficient for the passage of two horsemen abreast. The perpendicular sides of this pass vary in height from 400 to 700 feet, sometimes overhanging to such a degree as almost to exclude the light."—*Irby and Mangle's Travels.*

The beetling cliffs now arch not overhead,
Nor o'er the pass a chilly shadow spread,
But, streaming downwards, pours a flood of light,
And Petra bursts upon the dazzled sight.

Here,[3] from the solid cliff out-hewn, a shrine
Of finish'd workmanship and rich design,
Whose polish'd shafts and master-chisell'd stone
Proclaim the worship of some god unknown,
Pile upon pile, in graceful beauty rear'd,
By storm unshatter'd and by Time scarce sear'd,
High o'er the head, in massive grandeur rise,
And 'point their' haughty 'columns to the skies.'

Thou,[4] too, wert here, fair Rome, imperial Queen!
Where is the land thy glories have not seen?

[3] "This temple, called by the Arabs Khasne Pharaon, is hewn out of one enormous block of freestone. Its position is one of the most beautiful and striking that can be imagined, and the exquisiteness of its finish presents a strong contrast to the savage scenery that surrounds it."—*Laborde.*

[4] A Roman statue of Victory is one of the most conspicuous and interesting objects in this shrine.

Thou, too, hadst sought this city of the waste,
And thy proud eagles on her temple placed ;
And Victory's marble form—the emblem true
Of might that could, uncheck'd, a world subdue—
Rears high her head o'er Petra's sacred fane,
And tells of days she ne'er may see again.

There, stretch'd before the eye in wide extent,
Like pale Diana's arch in heaven bent,
Lies Petra's amphitheatre,—alas !
A shadow of its former self ; a mass
Of crumbling stone ! No more a savage crowd
Awakes the echoes with its plaudits loud ;
No more the arena rings with warlike clang,
Nor victims bleed beneath the lion's fang ;
Nor gentle beauty views, with glistening eye,
Some cruel scene of captive butchery ;
A prince's envied seat no more is known,
And weeds ignoble shroud a monarch's throne !

But,[5] Petra! ere the fleeting hour be sped,
Turn we a moment to thy mighty dead;
With mingled feelings, half of grief and pride,
Thou gazest mournfully on every side.
Oh could I soar on Inspiration's wings,
To paint the pomp of thy sepulchred kings!
For, 'midst thy palaces, where'er we stray,
Those gorgeous monuments our steps delay.
The wondering eye in every pile may trace
Corinthian beauty or Ionic grace;
Or e'en, perchance, Italia's hand has lent
Her art to rear each beauteous monument,
And Architecture's noblest powers, combined,
Embodied each creation of the mind;
For future ages every fabric raised,
To gaze on each, and marvel as they gazed.

[5] "Some hundred yards below the springs, begin the outskirts of the vast Necropolis of Petra; the sides of the mountains are covered with an endless variety of tombs."—*Irby and Mangle's Travels.*

Mourn we for thee ?—thy destinies recall
Cities as proud—as humbled in their fall.
In vain the Capitol uprears her head,
The once fear'd Spirit of the Past is fled:
In vain the Acropolis frowns o'er the plain,
The tottering ruins now alone remain—
Their hour is o'er—but feebleness, their might,
For each sun set in an eternal night.

Yet, Petra, mark! it was no common doom
That shrouded thee, alas! in hopeless gloom:
Thou heard'st the voice when Heaven pronounced thy fate,
'Thy habitations shall be desolate!'
And shuddering, conscience-stricken, at the sound,
Shook thy whole trembling fabric to the ground.
When Salem bow'd beneath a foreign yoke,
And Israel's sons a sound of mourning woke;

When Rome's fierce armies, madden'd by her blood,
Swept through her streets, a wild, resistless flood;
When Judah's daughters, 'neath the cruel blade,
Raised a faint shriek—a feeble cry for aid;
When sons fell fighting round a murder'd sire,
And Sion's hill became one mighty pyre,—
Petra![6] 'twas thine, when Israel's courage died,
To dare the victors in their hour of pride,
On ready arms with boastful haste to seize,
And fling thy challenge-banner to the breeze.
But now—that vaunting banner never more
Again shall flutter proudly, as of yore;
Nor warrior steel, nor warrior trappings gleam,
Nor war-cry break again the warrior's dream.
The tangled briar, on the crumbling wall,
Mocks the rich hangings of the banquet hall,

[6] At the siege and capture of Jerusalem, Petra, still in the zenith of her power, made formidable opposition to the Roman forces.

And shatter'd columns scarce suffice to tell
Where mighty monarchs once were wont to dwell.
The costly palaces of Edom's line,
In cheerless, solitary sorrow, pine,—
Yielding unwillingly to Time's decay,
Drop, stone by stone, in silent grief, away.

When sunset spreads a shadow o'er the sky,[7]
Thy echoes mock the wild owl's dreary cry;
Forth from his den the crouching lion steals;
High o'er the cliff the soaring eagle wheels;
While the fierce cormorant and raven share
The bleeding quarry in the vulture's lair.
These, Petra, are thy only tenants now;—
City of Esau, shroud thy haughty brow!
The Lord but spoke—and, lo! thy fate was seal'd;
The threaten'd vengeance for thy crimes reveal'd;

7 "But the cormorant and bittern shall possess it; the owl also, and the raven, shall dwell in it; and he shall stretch out upon it the lines of confusion and the stones of emptiness."—*Isaiah*, xxxiv. 2.

The word went forth, and all thy grandeur fled,
Or linger'd but amidst thy many dead;
And thou, low grovelling in thy kindred dust,
Art forced to own that Heaven is great and just.
What 'vail'd thy power when the prophet rose
And told the fatal advent of thy foes?
What 'vail'd thy pomp—thy name—thy pride—when all
But served to mark, more signally, thy fall?
E'en to this day, the wealth which thou possess'd[8]
Is doom'd, for ever, to deny thee rest;
What Time has spared, the avaricious band
Of Desert-robbers mar with ruthless hand;
And ever and anon, amid thy shrines,
The roving Arab marks some well-known lines,
In search of hidden wealth defaces each,
Whose fair proportions rise within his reach;

[8] The Arabs have despoiled every tomb which, from its inscription, they supposed might contain treasure.

And structures, beauteous as man could rear,
For gold's vile sake disfigured, disappear.

Petra, farewell!—farewell, thou giant shade
Of by-gone pomp, and hopes that have betray'd!
Once thou wert bless'd with all that e'er could bless;—
What art thou now?—a howling wilderness.
A signal monument of Holy Wrath,
Thy crumbling columns guide the Arab's path,
And heaven-ward pointing whence thy ruin came,
Mark thee a mighty CITY—but, in name!

CHILDHOOD.

My childhood's days—those sunny days of gladness unalloy'd,
When this bright world of pleasure seem'd but made to be enjoy'd,
When every morn but usher'd in mirth's endless happy train,—
My childhood's days—where are ye now?—would ye were here again.

My childhood's hopes—those rainbow hopes, that shone in life's young sky,
Without one summer cloud to shade the gazer's glistening eye;

Without one storm to sweep across the Future's
vista'd plain,—
My childhood's hopes—where are ye now?—would ye
were here again.

My childhood's joys—those simple joys, that sunn'd
the passing hour,
And made a little Eden plant of every smiling
flower,
And bound our hearts to days gone by, in memory's
golden chain,—
My childhood's joys—where are ye now?—would ye
were here again.

My childhood's friends—those merry friends, so loved
long, long ago,
Who shared my every happiness, who wept my every
woe;

Who hallow'd many a beauteous spot:—for them I look in vain;—

My childhood's friends—where are ye now?—would ye were here again.

ANOTHER YEAR.

—•—

Another year! another year!—how much the word portends!
How much of strange eventful change a twelvemonth comprehends!
Such mingled woe and happiness—'twere hard indeed to say
If joy or sorrow marks the year that 's passing fast away.

Another year!—how many hopes, all blooming once so fair,
Have blossom'd but to wither 'neath the chilly blast of care!

How many bright and sunny morns, with beauteous
azure sky,
Have dawn'd upon us—but to show their own
inconstancy!

Another year!—how many hearts, erst warm with love
and life,
Lie cold and pulseless in that home that knows no
care nor strife!
How often, 'mid some circle dear, chill death has dared
to steal,
And leave a wound that time itself can never, never
heal!

Yet grieve we not:—though hopes may fade, there yet
are more to bloom,
And waft the soul on buoyant wings away from
sorrow's gloom:

Though fairest morns have changed their smile, there
yet are days as bright,
That aye have summer's sunny skies from ruddy dawn
to night.

Though warmest hearts now beat no more, why sigh
we o'er their bliss,
That they have sought a purer and a better world
than this?
Why mourn we o'er some long-felt void in homes and
circles dear,
And rather cherish not the few that still may linger
here?

Farewell, ye fleeting moments all! and, chequer'd as
ye were,
Oh never may a darker day arouse the heart's
despair!

Afar adown the vale awakes, with deep though soften'd tone,
The iron voice of passing time:—another year is gone!

SONG.

Air—"Fleuve du Tage."

Oh, think of me but half as oft
As I shall think of thee,
When far, far sever'd, we may meet
But in the memory!
I would not bid a tear-drop fall,
I would not ask a sigh;
'Twould only show an aching heart,
And dim a lovely eye.

No—let the merry laugh of yore
Ring just as joyously;
Let sadness cloud thy brow no more;
But, oh! still think of me.

Awake, awake the blithesome song
I once so loved to hear,
And as thou singest, oh, believe
My spirit lingers near!

And when the thoughts of other days
Come floating o'er the soul,
Which, bright as stars in yonder sky,
Through Memory's heaven roll,
Oh, sigh not o'er the happy past
As if the dream gave pain!
But smile—perchance thy winning smile
May woo it back again!

CONGRATULATORY VERSES

ON THE MARRIAGE AND ARRIVAL AT CULZEAN CASTLE, AYRSHIRE, OF THE MOST NOBLE THE MARQUIS AND MARCHIONESS OF AILSA.

The harp, the harp!—On this auspicious day
Shall Echo slumber on the mountain side?
Shall Carrick wake no tributary lay,
To welcome Ailsa and his lovely bride?
Shall Scotia, while one bard may yet remain
To sweep a chord that trembles 'neath his hand,
Refuse to raise a rude though joyous strain,
And tell her gladness to each distant land?

He comes, he comes!—Bid martial music ring
Amid thine old ancestral walls, Culzean!
Arouse far Cassilis with the echoing
That greets the chieftain in his own domain!

Far from the beauteous south he brings a dame
To halls, from which, oh, never may she roam!
Fair as that lovely land from whence she came,
Bright as yon sun that lights her to her home!

Look forth, look forth, thou gentle stranger! gaze
On those thy very smile hath power to bless;
Accord this land thy meed of sweetest praise,
So passing fair in all its loveliness.
Say, did thine eye, when revelling among
Scenes whose bright memories are ne'er forgot,—
Hill, dale, and woodland, theme of many a song,—
E'er linger, raptured, o'er a lovelier spot?

'Mid trees embosom'd, whose grey arms have spread
Full many a long, eventful year, I ween,
A grateful shelter o'er the roe-deer's head,
Culzean's fortalice rises on the scene;

And proudly gazes she across the sea,
Whose wintry waves have lash'd her sides in vain,
But now lie slumbering so peacefully
As if they ne'er would dare the deed again.

And many a bark, whose gallant pennons stream,
Light as the gossamer upon the gale,
Gay as the fairy visions of a dream,
To greet thee, Lady, furls each snowy sail:
And from the bosom of the glassy deep
A thousand voices burst upon the ear,
And answering Echo, from grey Ailsa's steep,
Repeats in gladness each wild thrilling cheer.

High o'er Culzean's dark haughty donjon flaunt
The war-worn banners of the olden time,
As if they seem'd, in prideful joy, to vaunt
Of days that knew them in their warrior prime.

The rush of onset flutters them no more;
No more around them wakes the battle cry;
With triumphs wearied, once again they soar
In gladsome peace to hail the Kennedy!

On Dowhill's ruddy brow the beal-fires blaze;
The booming cannon roars across the firth,
Till far Glen Rosa listens with amaze,
And wild Goat-fell takes up the cry of mirth.
Welcome, oh, welcome to our own dear land!
Welcome, oh, welcome to your own Culzean!
Blest as the bard could wish, whose trembling hand
Wakes the poor homage of this heartful strain.

THE SCOTCH EMIGRANT'S FAREWELL.

O'ER the east the dark clouds lower;
Hark the breeze that sweeps the sea!—
Scotland! ere another hour,
That breeze wafts me far from thee.
O'er my head the white sail, swelling,
Floats impatient at delay;
On my cheek the tears are telling
How the wanderer fain would stay.
Scenes of all my earliest pleasure,
Bright as once ye were of yore,
Ye are now a priceless treasure,
Wrapt in memory's golden store.
Scenes of sweet association,
Sunny brae and shady glen,

Loved with youthful adoration,
I may view you ne'er again!
Ne'er again, on yon blue mountain,
May I cull the heather-bell;
Ne'er again, beside yon fountain,
Hear the strain once loved so well.
Gloaming comes, no merry voices
Float from far upon the gale;—
Where 's the heart that now rejoices?
They have seen the stranger sail.
Down amid yon valley, glistening,
Winds the burnie swift along;
Oh, how oft I 've linger'd, listening
To the music of its song!
Oh, how oft, in childhood, straying
By its flower-enamell'd side,
Watch'd the speckled 'trouties' playing,
Glancing 'neath its amber tide!
Little then dreamt I of sorrow,

Little then thought I of pain;
All was sunny—every morrow
Yesterday return'd again!
Who could think, when all was shining,
Winter's chilly hour would come;—
Were it not ungrateful pining,
Blest with such a happy home?
Now, alas, sweet scenes, we sever!
I must seek a distant strand;
Bloom thou on as bright as ever;—
Fare thee well, my native land!

"WHAT IS A POET'S LIFE?"

What is a poet's life, but scenes
Of sorrow and of grief?
What is a poet's death, but means
Of giving such relief?

What is his boyhood, but a bright
And budding summer flower?
What is his manhood, but the sight
Of this world's blighting power?

What is his age? a dying flame
That flickers in the blast:
What is his prayer? a deathless name,
When he from us hath pass'd.

What does he ask? a simple stone
In some sequester'd spot,
Where kindred souls may weep alone
And tell the poet's lot!

CHARLES STUART.

—•—

Weep, Scotia! weep o'er dark Culloden's plain,
The grave of hopes that ne'er may bloom again!
Mourn, Albyn![1] mourn o'er Moray's battle field,—
Where hearts lie cold that never learn'd to yield,
Where friend and foeman, in the grasp of death,
Together sank upon the purple heath,
And chief and clansman, falling side by side,
For Stuart woke one feeble cheer, and died.

The morning sun look'd down upon a sight,
To thrill the tamest spirit with delight:

[1] The ancient name of Scotland;—*vide* Campbell's Poems.

Stretch'd far and near, th' embattled armies lay,
Waiting, impatiently, the coming fray;
Bright gleam'd, as day-break saw each line advance,
Claymore and targe, Lochaber-axe and lance;
Loud rose Lochiel's—Glengarry's gathering cry,—
Clansmen, lead on! for James and Victory!

When evening came, the coronach's[2] low wail
In whispering accents told the mournful tale;
A thousand forms, erst vigorous with life,
Lay cold and pulseless on the field of strife:
Scotia's proud thistle, trampled to the ground,
Strew'd her torn leaves of liberty around;
All the bright dreams of victory and fame,
Like meteor stars, but vanish'd as they came;
Low in the dust lay glaive and tartan sheen,
And Justice' self wept, sternly, o'er the scene!

[2] The Highland lament for the dead.

Fatal Culloden! ah! thy memory
Recalls the bitter tear to many an eye!
The night-wind, sweeping Moray's lonely wave,
Sighs a sad requiem o'er the clansman's grave;
Green springs the heather on Drummossie's breast,
Where Scotia's bravest ones together rest;
And Nairn's dark waters, in a thousand rills,
Wake up the sorrows of their native hills.
Hush'd is the song on grey Benledi's side;
Silent and lone Loch Ericht's glassy tide,
With anguish voiceless, doom'd, for aye, to mourn
Bright sunny days that never may return.

But where is he, in whose ill-fated cause,
Albyn's bold chieftains spurn'd their country's laws?
Where is the prince, to whom each Highland heart
Clung with a hold that death alone could part?

That morning saw him 'midst as brave a band
As e'er on battle field unsheathed a brand;—
That eve beheld him, every comrade gone,
Defeated, hopeless, shelterless, alone.

Like some wild roe, upstarting as the gale
Wafts the deep bay of slot-hound on his trail;
From Arisaig to Invergarry's keep,
Beneath whose walls the loch's blue waters sleep,—
From strath to strath, from dusky glen to glen,
Where'er most distant from the haunts of men,—
From mountain side to mountain side he fled,
Life on his step—a price upon his head.
Some lonely hut, some far deep hidden cave,
A kindly shelter to the wanderer gave;
And faithful guards, their chief's rude couch around,
Waked o'er his sleep, and watch'd for every sound.
And well the Stuart knew that he might dare
Entrust his safety to a clansman's care;

For, while the strength of life could nerve an arm,
'Twas ready aye to shield their chief from harm.
For him they 'd shrink not at impending death,
But bless 'Prince Charlie' with their latest breath.

What 'vail'd the lowland gold[3] with men like those,
Pure as whose hearts no dew-bell gems the rose;
What though the wealth of worlds essay'd to buy
The hardy mountaineer's fidelity?
A traitor thought had tinged his cheek with shame,
And perfidy—he knew it but by name.

Such were the feelings of that gallant band[4]
Of clansmen, outlaw'd in their native land;
Robb'd of their humble homes by stern decree,
That left them scarce a dear-bought liberty;

[3] Thirty thousand pounds was the price set upon the Pretender's head.
[4] "The seven men of Glenmoriston," who were, for some considerable period, the protectors of Charles Stuart, are here alluded to.

Men who had, nightly, on the lone hill-side
Gazed on their 'shielings' burning far and wide;
Heard the wild echo of the spoiler's cry,
As each new blaze lit up the starless sky;
Or dash'd among their foes, as round they stood,
And quench'd the glowing embers with their blood.

No dastard dream of mercenary gain
Had o'er their souls cast e'en a passing stain;
Though reft of all that worldliness could prize,
The Southron bribe ne'er glisten'd in their eyes:
Their spirit shrank not at oppression's smart,
Nor venal honour swell'd one manly heart.
Bold as on Benvenue the dappled roe,
True as the grey-wing'd arrow from the bow;
With dauntless bearing and devoted blade,
Hands that would wither ere they had betray'd;
How doubly welcome was their task to shed
A ray of safety o'er the outcast's head!

And thou, fair Flora, noble-hearted maid!
When thine own prince besought thy timely aid,
When foes surrounded him on every hand,
And gleam'd the red cross[5] over sea and land,
Could'st thou be callous to the Stuart's fate,
And on the brink of danger hesitate?
From isle to isle, on those wild western shores,
On which the Atlantic all its fury pours,
From Uist's grey cliffs to Raasay's dreary beach,
Moor piled on moor as far as eye can reach,
Robed as thyself, his course the wanderer shaped,
And e'en when all escape seemed closed—escaped.

But, oh! when sailing on those lonely seas,
Strange forms swept past him on the vesper breeze;
Low wailing voices, as the night-wind sigh'd,
Came whispering round him on the heaving tide;

[5] The Red, or St. George's Cross, was the badge of the loyalist soldiers, just as the White Rose distinguished the followers of the Pretender.

They told of victims to barbarian laws,
Of lives all forfeited in Stuart's cause,
Of vengeful scaffolds reeking with a flood
Of Scotia's dearest—ay, and noblest blood—
Of orphan tears and widows unconsoled,
Of homes all desolate, and hearths all cold!
He saw and heard them—oh! how, sorrowing, bled
His heart in pity o'er the early dead!
O'er Elphinstone, and Tullibardine's chief,
Who fell, untimely, like the summer leaf;
O'er gallant Balmerino, doom'd to kneel
In Stuart's cause beneath the headsman's steel;
O'er many a friend, in that devoted strife,
Who pledged his faith, and seal'd it with his life.

Five moons had gazed on Mona's waters deep,[6]
And waned again 'neath blue Corrada's steep;

[6] Charles Stuart was concealed for five months among the glens and mountains of the West of Scotland.

Morning's grey dawn and evening's gentle gale,
Alas! had wafted no expected sail;
O'er the lone beach the outcast wanderers stray,
To hail the keel that linger'd on its way,
Or, from some cliff, the deep's broad outline mark,
And chide the wave that brought no saviour bark.
At length the news came down—a sail was seen,
Wild, wintry Moidart! near thy waters green;
And Gallia's colours, floating from the mast,
Proclaim'd the wanderer's every danger past.
He stood on deck, and gazed upon a shore
He never might, perhaps, revisit more;
His thoughts reverted to the sunny hour
That shone upon the birth of all his power.
Again he listen'd for the thrilling peal
That hail'd the white rose on thy shores, Loch Shiel!
Again he wander'd o'er the bright array
Led forth to battle on Culloden's day;

Thought of fair hopes and prospects once so high—
Hopes that had bloom'd, but only bloom'd to die.

"Land of my fathers! ere the shades of night
Shroud thee for ever from my straining sight,
Ere the breeze, waking o'er yon sleeping sea,
Wafts me afar from happiness and thee:
Ere yet unfaded from my filial view,
Home of my forefathers! A long adieu!
I stood alone on yon wild, rugged strand,
With none to 'friend me save my own right hand;
I raised the Standard in my father's name;
And clan on clan around that Standard came;
I swore to consecrate life's latest gasp,
To wrest the sceptre from an alien grasp,
And waft to Britain, upon Victory's wings,
Her hope of hopes—her ancient line of Kings.
Twice fifty years have scarcely pass'd away,
Since one Charles mourn'd o'er Worcester's fatal day;

And dark Culloden's plain, by Heaven's decree,
Another Worcester was, alas! to me.
Like Charles, preserved by superhuman power,
I live to smile at danger's deadliest hour;
Like him, may fortune brightest at the helm
Guide back my bark to my ancestral realm;
And Holyrood's grey echoing towers raise,
Round James's throne, the song of other days.
Yet should it not be so, should hope delay'd
Turn a deaf ear to all my prayers for aid,
Then, oh! forget that such there e'er has been,
And drop a veil o'er Stuart's closing scene.
Albyn, farewell! e'en o'er thy mountains blue
The night mist, stealing, dims my fading view,
O'er my pale cheek the glistening tear-drops swell;—
Home, friends and country, fare ye ever well!"

The morn dawn'd brightly over sea and land,
But saw no bark on Lochnanuagh's strand:

Far o'er the deep the favouring breezes bore
The flower of Scotia to fair Gallia's shore,
And weeping friends gazed anxious o'er the main,
And watch'd what gale should waft them back again!
Long, long they look'd, year after year pass'd by,
And yet no sail lit up the weary eye;
At length the whisper'd breath of rumour told,
That their loved, exiled, prince was waning old;
That toils and cares, when struggling for the crown,
Had bow'd his once so buoyant spirit down;—
Crush'd all the hopes that erst were wont to mock,—
His broken heart had sunk beneath the shock.

* * * *

Like some wild pibroch, at the close of day,
Now swelling full—now dying far away,—
So falls, in accents still to memory dear,
The Exile's story on a clansman's ear,
Whilst, fondly in their own 'Prince Charlie's' praise,
Fair Scotia's daughters wake immortal lays,

And aged grandsires, on the village green,
Tell of the glorious days that once have been—
Of Falkirk's rout, and Preston's gallant fight—
Of Holyrood's brave chiefs, and ladies bright—
Of Cope's bold troopers rushing from the field—
Of Hawley's veterans forced to fly or yield:
Then, as the tear rolls down each wrinkled face,
Mourn o'er the last of Stuart's royal race.

THE RING.

—✦—

Sweet priceless relic! thou art all that 's left
To tell of her who slumbers in the tomb;
To soothe the sorrowings of the bereft,
And dry the tear shed o'er her early doom.
Thy little circle ne'er can comprehend
The speaking charms it fain would represent;
Thy matchless lustre ne'er a ray could lend,
To brighten her soul's heavenly firmament.

Ah! yes, the passing beauty of her form,
The faultless sweetness of her angel face,
The melting glance that might a cynic warm,
No pen may paint, nor poet's fancy trace.

The living beauty of her gentle heart,
In sunnier tints than e'er met human eye,
More truly faithful than by limner's art,
Is deeply graven on the memory.

Remorseless Death! could'st thou not have forborne
To snap the gentlest ties that ever bound?
To snatch my flow'ret on her budding morn,
And strew her leaflets on the cold, cold ground?
Mysterious doom! that all that 's pure and bright,
Like meteor, glances—then is seen no more;
Comes but to dazzle us with Heaven's own light,
Then leaves us darker than we were before!

Sweet, beauteous Eba, whilst remembrance clings,
While this heart yet one last pulsation hath,
Thy form shall hover near on seraph wings,
And shed a halo round my darkest path.

This little relic, oft on it I gaze
With thoughts too sad for other eyes to read,—
Years, while thou livedst, seem'd but summer days;
Days, since thou left us, winter years indeed!

They tell me, Eba, that, as time rolls on,
Change after change will heal the heart that's torn:—
It shall be so—if but the sun, that shone
This lovely eve, lights not to-morrow's morn.
It shall be so—if but yon silent moon
May never cross the dark blue sky again.
Then will the sorrower, but, alas, too soon!
Forget thee, dearest—then, and only then!

Fond gift, eternal emblem of our love,
More priceless far than India's golden streams;
Thou guidest all my waking thoughts above,
And waftest Eba to my nightly dreams.

Tears from a fountain time can never dry,
Burst forth fresh gushing o'er my swelling heart:
Sweet relic, only with my latest sigh,
Thou and her image in my breast shall part.

THE PRIVATEER.[1]

THE farewell gun booms o'er the wave, big swells the
snowy sail;
The gallant bark bounds fearlessly before the rising
gale;
The crested billows burst in spray across her glistening
bow;
Oh, where's the heart that beats not high to look
upon her now?

Her crew, as fine a set of men as ever trode a deck,
To wield the gleaming marlin-spike, or snatch a soul
from wreck,

[1] During the last war, a privateer manned with the flower of the West Country, sailed on her first cruise from the shores of England. She was never afterwards heard of.

Lean here upon the bulwarks, or there climb high the mast,
To gaze in silence on the land they now were leaving fast.

Perchance a tear-drop fills some eye, yet soon 'tis brush'd away,
For tears but dim a sailor's glance, as showers, an April day;
Each grasps his cutlass-hilt, and turns a look of hope above,
For they are going forth to guard the homes and hearts they love.

And, from the shore, so cheerless now, waves many a snowy hand,
And many a lovely eye is fix'd upon that gallant band;

And many a soft-breathed prayer for them across the waters came,
In battle's hour of fear—of fear ?—they knew it but by name.

The foe had threaten'd Albion, they were now upon the wave,
They knew not that their path must be o'er many a Briton's grave ;
They knew not that till arm could wield the battle blade no more,
They ne'er might set a stranger foot on our beloved shore.

For these were men who, while the blood of life bedew'd a vein,
Would shed it for old England's sake again, ay, and again ;

For Albion's beauteous daughters, too, would dying
grasp the foe,
And down together 'neath the wave, the dead and
living, go.

Their native shore had scarce grown dim in distance
far behind,
When, hark! a sudden hurricane came sweeping on
the wind;
Came sweeping on the wind across the blue Atlantic's
breast,
Too soon, alas! to shade the brief bright vision of the
West.

Wild raged the storm, in mountains high the billows
upward curl'd,
Then down, down from the blacken'd sky again seem'd
backward hurl'd;

A short wild scream of terror rose above the tempest's roar,
And when the sun broke forth again the bark was seen no more!

Months—years have roll'd their course since then, and still, each weary day,
An aged form may yet be seen to wander round the bay;
Dull is the glance, so beaming once, yet no one wonders why,
For she has watch'd and wept enough to dim the brightest eye.

STANZAS.

—•—

Death, Death! whom seekest thou,
Who is thy victim to-day?
Stay, stay! let mercy now
Plead for the mourner—oh, stay!

Death, Death! seest thou that eye,
Mark'st thou, 'tis dazzling bright?
Stay, stay! answer me why,
Must thou quench quickly its light?

Death, Death! seest thou that form,
Mark'st thou perfection and grace?
Stay, stay! the heart is yet warm,
Why would'st its beauty deface?

Death, Death! seest thou that soul,
Mark'st thou, 'tis buoyant and free?
Ah, ah! o'er it no control,
Tyrant, is given to thee!

WRITTEN ON VISITING THE BATTLEMENTS OF NEWARK CASTLE.

—•—

Behind rude Goat-fell slowly sinks the sun,
As if 'twere loth to lose so fair a sight,
And lingers, though its weary race is run,
For one last glance, as brief as it is bright.

Land of the Poet! from grey Newark's wall,
I love to gaze on summer's closing day,
And view tower, woodland, sunny streamlet, all
Once dear to those who now have pass'd away.

Land of the Painter! from 'brown Carrick's' steep,
O'er the sweet scene, enchanted roams the eye,
Where winding Ayr and Doon's bright waters sweep,
Half-hidden 'neath their verdant drapery.

Land of the Patriot! Arran's beauteous isle,
That sleeps so calmly 'midst a golden flood
Of western glory, points to where, erewhile,
The Bruce, an outcast on its strand, once stood.

Proud may'st thou be, thou fair, thrice-favour'd shore,
Ye 'blue-capp'd hills,' right boastful may ye rise;
For ye have seen, what seen may be no more,
A Wallace bleed to burst 'a tyrant's ties.'

Oh! I could linger long, untired to gaze,
Enraptured, o'er a paradise like this;
To trace each streamlet through its woody maze,
Fit haunt of love—fit scene of peaceful bliss.

Oft through yon groves, at this sweet vesper hour,
When the glad mavis caroll'd forth his song,
When Spring breathed fragrance thro' each dewy bower,
And 'bonnie Doon' roll'd merrily along.

Careless I 've stray'd,—or, 'neath some aged tree
Reclining, watch'd the sun's departing beam;
And thought of him, whose wood-notes, wild and free,
Have lent a sacred charm to 'brae' and stream.

Oft shall the bard, his gloomy track to cheer,
This scene of passing loveliness recall;
And gaze on memory's picture with a tear,
As if he look'd once more from Newark's wall!

OLD LETTERS.

Old letters! oh, then, spare them; they are priceless
for their age!
I love, oh! how I love to see each yellow time-stain'd
page!
They tell of joys that are no more—of hopes that long
have fled,—
Old letters! oh, then, spare them; they are sacred to
the dead.

They tell of times, of happy times, in years long, long
gone by,
Of dear ones who have ceased to live, but in the
memory;

They picture many a hallow'd scene, in sunny days of yore;
Old letters! oh, then, spare them; for they are a priceless store!

Old am I now, and grey-hair'd too, deserted and alone,
And all of those, I once might call my friends, alas! are gone;
Yet oft, when midnight veils the world, in solitude's retreat,
With each one, in his silent tomb, I hold communion sweet.

Old letters! here is one—the hand of youth is on its face;
Ah! that was from a brother young, in some far foreign place;

A sailor boy, beloved by all, frank, open-hearted, brave;—
Cold, cold and lonesome is his rest, beneath the Atlantic wave.

Another, stain'd with dark-red spots, as clasp'd by bloody hands,
Was found beneath a father's corse, on dread Corunna's sands;
A stranger, with the kindliest care, convey'd the relic dear,
Old letters! ye are priceless, ye have cost a widow's tear!

Another—know I not that hand? Oh! she was bright and fair,
Too pure, too gentle, and too good for angels her to spare

More than a few brief years on earth : well, Death,
thou might'st be vain,
Thou hast not such another flower in all thy dark
domain.

Oh ! ye are now the only links that bind me to the
past ;
Sweet, sweet memorials of the days too happy, far, to
last ;
The tear-drop fills again the eye which tears had
almost fled :
Old letters ! ye are precious ! ye are sacred to the
dead !

FAREWELL TO COLLEGE.

FAREWELL, farewell! old venerable pile,
Ye dusky towers, a long, a last adieu;
A tear-drop mingles with my parting smile,
Hope claims the one,—the other falls for you!

Yes, Memory bids the liquid tribute flow,
To scenes, and friends who sunn'd life's early day,
To times so happy once—long, long ago—
All but whose memories have pass'd away.

And Recollection paints our buoyant hearts,
In those our years of thoughtlessness and joy,
And oh! the colour, which her touch imparts,
Ages of wearing care can ne'er destroy.

For each green islet 'mid life's stormy sea
Will rise more verdant from the passing wave;
Each fair oasis in the memory
Will seem the fairer as we near the grave.

And you, ye time-worn walls, oh! could ye speak,
Could ye but picture sights that ye have seen,
Then might ye tell of many a toil-blanch'd cheek,
How changed, alas! from what it once had been.

Then might ye tell of many a laughing eye,
Lit with the smiles such eyes, alone, can wear,
Some mother doted on in years gone by,
Now dim and lustreless with early care.

Then might ye tell of hearts, that erst were light,
Crush'd down beneath misfortune's iron heel;
Of youth's gay hopeful visions once so bright,
Doom'd stern Reality's dark change to feel.

Yet have ye sunny scenes.—Should some complain,
That they, perchance, have lost what most they prized,
When many come in triumph, and remain
To see their dearest wishes realised?

No, no, let such go forth into this wide
And restless world 'unnoticed and unknown,'
They have but seen the picture's gloomy side—
Fate has but made that gloomy side their own.

No more, no more—another fleeting year
Will bring the Kalends of another May;
And he, who now has dropp'd a parting tear,
Will, then, be battling onward, far away.

New forms, new features, will efface the scene,
Strange voices break at once the gentle spell;
Thou wilt forget that such there e'er has been,
Yet still, old Alma Mater, fare thee well!

STANZAS.

THEY tell me that my gallant boy
Fell cover'd with renown;
They tell me Death can ne'er destroy
Glory's immortal crown;
They tell me Victory, afar,
Peal'd o'er the ensanguined plain;
What care I for the voice of war?—
He comes not back again!

They tell me that he fought and bled
As dauntless warriors die;
They tell me that around him, dead,
A thousand foemen lie;

They tell me that my only one
Fell 'midst the honour'd slain;
What care I though he fell alone?—
He comes not back again!

They tell me that his dying voice
Proclaim'd our liberty,—
"Rejoice, my countrymen, rejoice,
Once more our homes are free;"
They tell me that his single hand
Dash'd down the tyrants' chain;
What care I, now, for slavery's band?—
He comes not back again!

On tower and hill the watchlight burns,
For triumphs wait the brave;
But one that went, no more returns,
He sleeps beyond the wave;

Each beaming eye is lit with joy,
They think not of the slain;
They mourn not o'er a gallant boy,
Who comes not back again!

SCOTIA.

Scotia, cradle-land of genius! theme of many a poet's lay;
O'er whose form a magic beauty seems to hold resistless sway;
O'er whose rough and storm-cleft mountain, heathy moor, or woody dell,
Lingers, and will ever linger, some wild, sweet, enchanting spell!

Happy land! look but around thee, turn thy gaze from shore to shore;
Say, hast thou one glen unhallow'd by some voice that 's now no more?

Hast thou, 'mid thy sunny valleys, one bright stream
that ne'er has sigh'd
O'er the bard whose wont it was to wander by its
silver tide ?

Is it morning ?—list, the music, wafted from yon
distant hill,
Mingles in harmonious sweetness with the murmuring
of the rill :—
Is it eve ? then, hark, the gloaming echoes with the
lightsome song ;
'Tis some village maiden singing, as she homeward
trips along.

Land of beauty ! fascination sits enthroned where'er
thou art ;
At thy sight, spontaneous worship bursts fresh-gushing
from the heart ;

From far countries wondering strangers come, attracted
by thy praise,
All their toil at once forgotten, when entranced on
thee they gaze.

Pilgrim minstrels, too, have sought thee—laid their
offerings at thy feet,
Marvelling not that thine own poets warbled in such
accents sweet;
Roving 'midst thy glens and mountains, caught at
once the impassion'd strain;
Seized their harps, and woke an echo they may never
hear again!

Mingling with their kindred spirits, inspiration
thrill'd the string,—
Scotia's breezes swept across it; Scotia's beauties
bade them sing,

Fired, as erst in ancient story, scarce they touch'd
the quivering chords;
Scarce they raised their trembling fingers, ere the soul
broke forth in words.

Yet, what need hast thou of minstrels? thou who,
aye, could'st boast a band,
Bright with gifted sons of genius, ever prompt at thy
command?
Burns, whose harp thrills every bosom—his the touch
that knew no peer;
Campbell, gentle bard, whose numbers fall like music
on the ear:

Scott,—the clang of border foray rings throughout his
martial line;
Ramsay,—rural loves and beauty who could paint with
pen like thine?

Well such men canst thou appreciate, well thou know'st the poet's meed,
All he loves, and all he lives for, honour to his humble reed.

Tardy thou art not t' award it; proud thou art, and justly too:
Few the lands so highly favour'd; ay, alas! by far too few;
Thus it is that wandering minstrels, whencesoe'er their footsteps roam,
Ever meet from thee a welcome—ever find in thee a home!

"IN MEMORIAM."

And art thou gone—for ever gone—my long-loved early friend,
And is it thus that all the dreams of other days must end?
And is it thus that hope deferr'd must glide away at last,
And leave us nought to cling to, save the memory of the Past?

How dear to me that memory now—how dear—how doubly dear
The hallow'd recollection of many a by-gone year;

How cherish'd each familiar spot, each well remember'd
scene,
Thus link'd to thee and happiness in days that once
have been!

Each little word is treasured now—as treasured ne'er
before,
Since, ah! the lips that utter'd it may never utter
more;
The joyous echoes of thy voice we listen for in
vain,
For ever hush'd amongst us, they may greet us ne'er
again.

Our boyhood was a merry time—oft merrier than we
deem,
'Till once we 're hurried far adown life's rough and
troubled stream—

And sunny days those must have been, indeed, when even yet,
Thought pictures them in colours we never can forget!

Methinks I see again the hill where we were wont to stray,
Or, basking in the sunshine, dream the summer-tide away;
Or, gazing o'er the ocean, mark the fishers' tiny sail
Spread its white bosom eagerly to catch the evening gale.

The wild bee round the heather-bell still sings her little song,
Now near—now falling faintly, as she swiftly speeds along;

The hum of yonder busy town, borne far upon the breeze,
By distance sweetly soften'd—comes floating o'er the trees.

Methinks I seek, yet once again, the river's sparkling tide,
Where we so oft, in other days, have wander'd side by side;
Methinks I trace its winding course 'neath bush and ivied steep,
Until at last its merry voice is silenced in the deep.

Its wavelets, in the sunshine—just as they did of yore—
Are dancing still right cheerily from woody shore to shore;

Or, weary of their pastime now, lie slumbering in the shade,
Hush'd in the dark and rocky bed which they themselves have made.

The mill, half hidden 'mid the trees, still stems the impatient flood,
And stands the monarch of the stream, just as it ever stood;
The ancient bridge still boldly rears her tottering arch on high,
And seems yet more to tremble for her own stability.

I see them all but little changed, till once I look around,
And hear, alas! no more again thy merry laugh resound,

And miss an old familiar face, remember'd, ah! so
well,
And find a blank whose dreariness no tongue can ever
tell.

We each one, in our early youth, chose out his path
of life,
And each began his journey through a world of care
and strife;
But, sever'd though in course of years, our hearts,
united fast,
Were ever buoyant with the hope that we should
meet at last.

And so we will—what though, alas! thine was an
early doom,
Ere yet the fragile flowers of Hope had budded into
bloom,

Though I am left to battle on, alone, o'er Life's rough plain,
If Heaven in mercy suffer it, we still shall meet again.

Sleep on—and peaceful be thy sleep, my old companion dear!
Thou hast, at least, been spared the griefs of those who linger here;
Thou hast, at least, felt sorrow less—if even little joy—
For this world knows no happiness that has not its alloy!

THE END.

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